

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1 -- 13. (canceled)

1           14. (new) An apparatus for aligning a stack of flexible  
2 sheets on a substrate having an outer edge, some of the sheets  
3 projecting laterally past one of the edges, the apparatus  
4 comprising:  
5           a stabilizing element shiftable horizontally toward and  
6 away from the one edge of the substrate and having a face directed  
7 toward the sheets;  
8           a slip-preventing layer on the face; and  
9           means for shifting the element horizontally toward the  
10 stack and substrate for engaging the projecting sheets and pushing  
11 same inward on the substrate to a position lying on or inward of  
12 the outer edge without vertically bending or deflecting the sheets.

1           15. (new) The apparatus defined in claim 14 wherein the  
2 layer is resilient.

1           16. (new) The apparatus defined in claim 15 wherein the  
2 layer is made of an elastomer.

1                   17. (new) The apparatus defined in claim 15 wherein the  
2                   element has an upper part and a lower part.

1                   18. (new) The apparatus defined in claim 17 wherein the  
2                   upper and lower part are joined together at a nonplanar interface.

1                   19. (new) An apparatus for aligning a stack of flexible  
2                   sheets on a substrate having an outer edge, some of the sheets  
3                   projecting laterally past one of the edges, the apparatus  
4                   comprising:

5                   a stabilizing element shiftable horizontally toward and  
6                   away from the one edge of the substrate;  
7                   a member on the element engageable under the stack; and  
8                   means for shifting the element horizontally toward the  
9                   stack and fitting the member under the projecting sheets to support  
10                  same while and pushing the projecting sheets inward on the  
11                  substrate to a position lying on or inward of the outer edge  
12                  without vertically bending or deflecting the sheets.

1                   20. (new) The apparatus defined in claim 19 wherein the  
2                   element has a horizontal surface portion generally level with an  
3                   upper surface of the substrate.

4                   21. (new) A method of aligning a stack of flexible  
5                   sheets on a substrate having an outer edge, some of the sheets

6 projecting laterally past one of the edges, the method comprising  
7 the step of:

8 pressing a nonslip surface of a stabilizing element  
9 against the laterally projecting sheets so as to push the laterally  
10 projecting sheets in at least to the outer edge without bending  
11 while pushing them in; and thereafter

12 pressing the stabilizing element against the other sheets  
13 in the stack to align them on the substrate.

1 22. (new) The method defined in claim 21, further  
2 comprising the step before pressing the stabilizing element against  
3 the laterally projecting sheets of:

4 aligning the substrate relative to the stabilizing  
5 element.

1 23. (new) The method defined in claim 21, further  
2 comprising the step of

3 reducing friction between a lowermost sheet of the stack  
4 and a support surface of the substrate on which it rests.

1 24. (new) The method defined in claim 23 wherein  
2 friction is reduced by providing a low-friction foil between the  
3 lowermost sheet and the upper surface.

1                   25. (new) The method defined in claim 23 wherein  
2   friction is reduced by coating the upper surface with a lubricant.

1                   26. (new) A method of aligning a stack of flexible  
2   sheets on a substrate having an outer edge, some of the sheets  
3   projecting laterally past one of the edges, the method comprising  
4   the step of:

5                   engaging a support surface of a stabilizing element  
6   underneath the laterally projecting sheets and pushing the  
7   stabilizing and the laterally projecting sheets in at least to the  
8   outer edge without bending the laterally projecting sheets; and  
9   thereafter

10                  pressing the stabilizing element against the other sheets  
11   in the stack to align them on the substrate.